

Pershore Baptist Church



Messenger

Broad Street, Pershore, Worcestershire

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www.pershorebaptist.org

Church Secretary Ann P. Taylor
tel. 01386-561314 e-mail: parkerann_taylor@yahoo.com

Dear Friends

Wow ... what a privilege to be asked to write for the highly prestigious and not insubstantial magazine known as the *Pershore Messenger*. (Mike, I think you are doing a fantastic job, if not for the environment then certainly for the edification of the saints.)

When I think of God's beloved people found here in Pershore, my heart is glad and my spirit lifts. I cannot help but experience a warmth of welcome and some *flantastic* fun (ask Josh or Daniel Hart) and fellowship when among you. There is a tangible sense of joyful anticipation each time I have visited. I think it maybe mutual. Now as we prepare together for my coming to serve *with* you as pastor and making my home among you, I pause and think how favoured and privileged I am. Thank you for the many kindnesses, the sensitive ways in which you have received me and for your thoughtful care toward me and my family. It is wonderful and I am very grateful.

One friend in ministry often challenges me with the question '*What do you know?*' Of course scriptural answers abound and might include Romans 8:28 or 2 Timothy 1:12 or again Romans 5:3; and as that spiritual sage Jimmy Cricket said '*... and there's more!*' So what do I know? ! ...

I *know* that I am, by God's gracious timing, part of a great fellowship

with a long (for Baptists at any rate) and illustrious history, one with a rich heritage of worship, witness and service stretching back 350 years. So as we will soon celebrate such an auspicious anniversary, I *know* that I am coming to a church which has been well served down the years not only by a multitude of loyal members but also by many faithful ministers of Jesus Christ, who together with me know that we can not build on any other foundation 'than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.' (1 Cor. 3:11)

I *know*, too, that I am part of a church family which has in many ways thrived during a fruitful interregnum where gifts and talents have been willingly employed in the service of the gospel and to God's glory. It is wonderful to see and hear how one sows the seed, another waters it, 'but God made it grow!' (1 Cor. 3:7). May such team work always characterize our life together for it makes for healthy and sustainable ministry. May God grant us grace as we journey on together and wisdom to discern and pursue his perfect will. We each have a unique part to play, let's have fun discovering how that takes shape.

On a personal note, I also now *know* something of the ongoing fulfilment of a simple promise I believe God whispered to me many months ago. Indeed, when I have

cried out to him in anguish, despair or frustration, he has gently whispered it again and again to my soul, 'Trust me' he said 'and I will bring you to a good place'. Well I have to pinch myself almost daily as I think of how God is indeed bringing me to a good place. A good place geographically for sure. But more importantly to a good place emotionally and relationally too. The only condition God made was that I should trust Him.

I tend to make a distinction between faith and trust. It is perhaps only one of degree. Faith, it seems to me, is active. Like a muscle it needs exercise and, like a seed, with exercise it will grow. Trust is, perhaps, a more settled, even passive position of rest. It is a posture which knows and appreciates that all that needs to be done has either been done, or is being done by One infinitely more powerful and well able to accomplish it, by God. Through trust we cultivate what WH Vanstone denotes 'The Stature of Waiting.' During what seemed like an often painfully long period of waiting and wondering, and, at points, of feeling somewhat uncertain, certainly powerless, it was as if all God was asking of me was to trust Him: to lean against the secure wall of his loving goodness, infinite wisdom and limitless power. Trusting is a place where we learn to wait for God, where we don't rush ahead. It has for me become a place of solace and protection in the midst of life's

pressures and competing demands, its let downs and disappointments. As Brennan Manning so eloquently puts it 'Ruthless trust is an unerring sense, way deep down, that beneath the surface agitation, boredom, and insecurity of life, it's gonna be all right. Ill winds may blow, more character defects may surface, sickness may visit and friends will surely die; but a stubborn, irrefutable certainty persists that God is with us and loves us in our struggle to be faithful.'

For now, one more thing I know. I *know* that were in this together, looking out for one another, supporting and encouraging each other, spurring one another on in our walk with Jesus and our desire for his Spirit enabled contagious holiness to more fully permeate our lives. It's fantastic to be coming to a church with so many admirable qualities and yes I dare say some faults as well. That's reassuring, because I know at least I'll fit in! Bless you for your warmth of welcome, the spontaneous and lovingly planned acts of hospitality, the sensitivity of spirit, the blossoming talents, the opportunities which knock, the wealth of God-given resources, especially the beauty of Christ seen in his redeemed people. Here's to the future, our future, no correction to *His* future. 'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a

future.' (Jeremiah 29:11)

What do *you* know? Answers on a post card (or email) please ...

Yours because we are His,
Mark

Markjennings767@msn.com

Thank you Gracious Father for your unconditional love, your unmerited favour and your great faithfulness made known to us in the Lord Jesus and fleshed out and made real now in the lives of your people here. May your rich blessings of joy and peace be upon your people, as you lead and enable us by you good Spirit. May we expect great things from you and accomplish great things for you. And in everything, may you receive all the glory. Amen.

Immanence

I come in the little things,
Saith the Lord:

Not borne on morning wings

Of majesty, but I have set My Feet
Amidst the delicate and bladed
wheat

That springs triumphant in the
furrowed sod.

There do I dwell, in weakness and
in power,

Not broken or divided, saith our
God!

In your straight garden plot I come
to:

About your porch My Vine

Meeke, fruitful, doth entwine;

Waits, at the threshold, Love's
appointed time.

*From a poem by Evelyn Underhill
(1875 - 1941)*

June 1 Justin Martyr

c. 100 - 165

Justin Martyr is regarded as the first ever Christian philosopher. He was born at Nablus, Samaria, of parents of Greek origin, and was well educated in rhetoric, poetry and history before he turned to philosophy. He studied at Ephesus and Alexandria and tried the schools of the Stoics, the Pythagoreans, and the Platonists. Then in c130 Justin became a Christian, and never looked back. His long search for truth was satisfied by the Bible, and above all by Christ, the Word of God.

This apologist and martyr is known as the most important early 'apologist'. He went on to offer a reasoned defence for Christianity, explaining that it was the fulfilment of the Old Testament prophecies. Justin's aim was evangelism: he thought that pagans would turn to Christianity if they were made aware of Christian doctrine and practice.

Justin's martyrdom took place in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, along with six other believers. At his trial, whose authentic record survives, he clearly confessed his Christian beliefs, refused to sacrifice to the gods, and accepted suffering and death. As he had previously said to the emperor: "You can kill us, but not hurt us."

That I may know Him ...

"That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings." Phillipians 3:10

Do you ever reach a point where you feel that basically, you have 'had enough' of bad times? You want to say: "I know I shouldn't be saying this but I really don't want to enter into the fellowship of Jesus' sufferings right now. I would rather like a bit of green pastures and splashing about in still waters at this point, actually."

We all know the feeling. The various trials and tribulations of our lives can seem just too much at times. Of course we know that millions of people are far worse off - struggling with illness and poverty, but that is not the point. Our own suffering, whatever causes it, is bad enough, real enough to us, who are experiencing it. It is really hurting us.

At the end of the day, we can only

It is necessary to draw near to God, but it is not required of you to prolong your speech till everyone is longing to hear the word 'Amen'.

C H Spurgeon

As a thoughtful air hostess

who wants the best for her passengers, I always give this advice: "Ladies and gentleman, make up your mind before entering the lavatory, because once you close the door, there's no turning round."

*J. Elrod
Reader's Digest*

look again to Jesus. "We can never fully plumb the mystery of what took place on the Cross," writes Philip Yancey. "But it does offer the consolation that God is unwilling to put his creatures through any test that he himself has not endured." Yancey continues, "From famous people like Joni Eareckson Tada, from unknowns in country hospitals, from inmates in hellish Third World prisons, I have heard something like this: 'At least, because of Jesus, God understands how I feel.'"

When hope is lost, we can know that the evils and sufferings that afflict our lives are so real and so significant to God that he willed to share them and endure them himself. When God seems absent, he may be closest of all. When God seems dead, he is coming back to life. And then comes Pentecost and the fire falls. The Church is thrust out in the power of the Holy Spirit to live, work and suffer - and the gates of hell shall not prevail against us, come what may.

June 21 Summer Solstice

Sol + stice come from two Latin words meaning 'sun' and 'to stand still'. As the days lengthen, the sun rises higher and higher until it seems to stand still in the sky. The Summer Solstice results in the longest day and the shortest night of the year. The Northern Hemisphere celebrates in June, and the Southern Hemisphere celebrates in December.

While the Druids worship at Stonehenge and elsewhere, here some Christian alternatives that honour the Creator rather than the create.

From Jesus on the cross to you in church each Sunday.... how it all fits together

Jesus' finished work on the cross provided the 'medicine' for the cure for the sins of the world. Now, through the Holy Spirit, we Christians are to carry the medicine to the lost, in our spheres of influence and into all of the world, through the church's missionary enterprise.

The life and work of the local church is the New Testament strategy for reaching the world, and missionary sending organizations simply help facilitate this work. In the local church the gospel is preached "in Jerusalem" (Acts 1:8) and teaching is done to make disciples and teach everything that Jesus has commanded (Matthew 28:19-20). And out of the church those are sent whom God is calling on special assignment, "in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (verse 8), to cross language and cultural barriers with the gospel of Jesus Christ (Acts 13:1-3).

We participate in the return of Jesus Christ through our involvement in gathering in his people for whom he died, and in taking the gospel to "every tribe and language and people and nation" (Revelation 5:9; 7:9).

The first century church prayed "Marana tha," "Come, O Lord." By this prayer for the appearing of the Lord the first century believers were prompted to greater zeal in sharing their witness and in readying themselves for Jesus' return.

Does the past haunt you?

A lady had driven her car into a ditch, and there she sat. When the police arrived, they asked her what had happened. "I was looking in the rear view mirror, instead of looking at the road ahead," she explained. What a thought! There is no way to go forward if your eyes are focused on what's behind - either in driving, or in life. A lot of people 'ditch' themselves because they can't take their eyes off the past, focus on the future, and move ahead, with hope in God.

Give up all hope for a better yesterday. You can't change the past. It is dangerous to obsess over it. Instead, consider that there are over 500 verses in the Bible that tell us that God is merciful and longing to forgive us and restore us, if we only turn to him. Listen to these words from Isaiah: 'Do not remember the former things, neither consider the things of old. For behold, I am doing a new thing...' (Is 43:18,19). Don't let the past ruin your future - let God begin to do that 'new' thing in your life.

Afloat, afield

God and Jesus and the Spirit so pure,
Possess me, and shield me, assist me sure,
Order my path and before my soul go
In hollow, on hill, and on plain below,
Afloat, afield, the assisting Three sure.

An ancient Celtic prayer

Are you a mouldie? Want to talk to your nang children?

Can you understand a teenager? Not psychologically - probably no one can do that. But quite literally - what language are they speaking these days?

If you find your teenager increasingly hard to understand, you might like to buy a new book, 'The A-Z of Teen Talk', to help you make some sense of your offspring. Here you can learn the meanings of such gems as 'vanilla' (boring); 'jamming' (hanging around); 'za' (pizza); and 'antwaky' (unstylish). Then there's 'flat roofin' (stressed); 'elton' (a toilet); 'klington' (irritating younger sibling); 'mouldie' (parent); 'nang' (excellent, brilliant); 'wafwaan' (what's going on); and 'rago' (okay).

The book was researched at Cheltenham Ladies College over the course of a year, and written by 13 year-old Lucy van Amerongen, who also gives three golden rules that all teenagers seem to obey instinctively: never make eye contact when talking to a 'mouldie' (parent), always mumble inaudibly, and always include the word 'like' in, like, every sentence, like. Rago, like?

Every morning, a little girl would go in the bathroom to watch her mother as she was putting on her makeup to go to work. But this certain morning when Mum turned to leave the bathroom, the little girl loudly said, "You forgot to kiss the toilet paper goodbye!"

From your hand

From your hand, O Lord, we receive everything. You stretch your powerful hand, and turn worldly wisdom into holy folly. You open your gentle hand, and offer the gift of inward peace. If sometimes it seems that your arm is shortened, then you increase our faith and trust, so that we may reach out to you. And if sometimes it seems that you withdraw your hand from us, then we know that it is only to conceal the eternal blessing which you have promised - that we may yearn even more fervently for that blessing.

*A prayer of Soren Kierkegaard,
1813 - 1855.*

*Born into a wealthy Lutheran..family,
he spent almost all his life in his native
Copenhagen.*

*His philosophical writings have made many
consider him the father of modern
existentialism.*

A Canticle for Brother Sun

Praised be You, My Lord, in all
Your creatures,
Especially Sir Brother Sun,
Who makes the day and enlightens
us through You.
He is lovely and radiant and grand;
And he heralds You, his Most High
Lord.

St Francis of Assisi

"**The congregation** was wonderful," said the visiting minister after the service. "They were so polite that they covered their mouths when they yawned."

River and Sky

Move our hearts with the calm, smooth flow of your grace. Let the river of your love run through our souls. May my soul be carried by the current of your love, towards the wide, infinite ocean of heaven. Stretch out my heart with your strength, as you stretch out the sky above the earth. Smooth out any wrinkles of hatred or resentment. Enlarge my soul that it may know more fully your truth.

*Gilbert of Hoyland, died c.1170
Abbot of the Cistercian monastery of
Swineshead in Lincolnshire*

Honey, honey

Next time you cut yourself, reach for the honey jar. Treating cuts with honey has worked where even antibiotics have failed, suggests a new study. Wounds can become sterile in three to ten days.

Scientists believe that honey's healing power is due to the enzyme glucose oxidase, which produces hydrogen peroxide, an antiseptic, while the high sugar concentration inhibits bacterial growth. Some hospitals are already using Medihoney, a honey-based dressing, to treat patients.

Using honey to help cure wounds is not new. It was first used by the Ancient Greeks and Egyptians. Now, it seems, a number of doctors in Bangor, North Wales, agree with them.

God has not called us to see through each other but to see each other through.

A hug a day, please

When were you last hugged? A recent study has found that everyone needs at least one hug a day in order to cope with the stress of modern life.

Yet a third of people in the UK receive no daily cuddle. And three quarters of us wish that we were hugged more than we are. In families, younger members get most of the hugs, with parents often left out. After the age of 11, hugs decrease.

These are the findings of a survey by scientists at Manchester Metropolitan University. "Britain has forgotten how to hug," said one senior psychologist. "We are out of the habit. And yet a hug is an important part of life. We are basically animals and so need physical contact just as animals do."

'Political correctness' is blamed, because hugging people can be seen as 'inappropriate'.

Right-click

Tech Support: 'I need you to right-click on the Open Desktop'.

Customer: 'OK'.

Tech Support: 'Did you get a pop-up menu?'

Customer: 'No'.

Tech Support: 'OK. Right-click again. Do you see a pop-up menu?'

Customer: 'No'.

Tech Support: 'OK, sir. Can you tell me what you have done up until this point?'

Customer: 'Sure. You told me to write 'click' and I wrote 'click''

(I know about these things – Editor)

Our suffering oak trees

Our oak trees are in trouble. A devastating disease is advancing through our country's forests, affecting at least 100 areas, and threatening the very life of thousands of oak trees.

It is virulent and it is called oak decline. It slowly kills the plant from the top down, and experts fear that global warming will increase the spread of the disease. Some experts even predict that oak decline could prove as devastating as Dutch elm disease did in the 1970s.

The Forestry Commission has launched an investigation, and is urging people to notify officials of any sign of the disease. The first sign of oak decline is a yellowing of the foliage. Leaves then start to thin, and the plants die from the top downwards. Cankers in the trunk can bleed a black, pus-like liquid.

Oak decline weakens the tree's ability to fight attacks from insects or fungi. Trees that should live for 400 years are dying at 40. From first signs to death, it can take only three years.

A Christian is –

A Mind through which Christ thinks;
A Heart through which Christ loves;
A Voice through which Christ speaks;
A Hand through which Christ helps.

Got it all already

"I cannot understand you," said the young man to his unmarried aunt. "You seem so happy and contented. I've always thought that unmarried women are lonely and miserable and just longing for the presence of a man about the place."

"Well," his aunt responded, smiling, "I've got a fireplace that smokes, a parrot that swears, a cat that stays out half the night with no explanation, and a dog that leaves muddy footprints all over the house. What more do I want?"

Success

Don't aim at success - the more you aim at it and make it a target, the more you are going to miss it. For success, like happiness, cannot be pursued; it must ensue, and it only does so as the unintended side-effect of one's dedication to a cause greater than oneself or as the by-product of one's surrender to a person other than oneself.

Happiness must happen, and the same holds true for success: you have to let it happen by not caring about it.... Then you will live to see that in the long run -- in the long run, I say! - success will follow you precisely because you had forgotten to think of it.

*Viktor Frankl
Psychiatrist, concentration camp survivor and
author of Man's Search for Meaning*

Weekly Church Events

Sundays	
10.30am	Family service with Sunday School Communion 3rd Sundays
6.00pm (5.00pm in winter)	Evening Worship Communion 1st Sundays
Mondays	
1.30pm	Little Fishes playgroup
7.30pm	House Group Middle Lane, Crophorne
7.45pm	Prayer meeting at Church
Wednesdays	
2.30pm	Women's Own – Lower Room
7.45pm	Prayer and Bible Study 21 Ganderton Court
8.00pm	Bible Study 48 Mayfield Road
Thursdays	
10.30am	Baby talk
7.45pm	Deacon's Meeting 1st and 3rd Thursdays

There is a **Monthly Communion service** on a Wednesday at 2.30pm

Impact- A generation Youth Event on 4th Sunday at 7.00pm

The **Thursday Club** meets in the Lower Room at 7.30pm on the 4th Thursday of each month.

Church Badminton is between 8-9pm on 1st and 3rd Fridays of the month in Pershore High School. Details from Anne Sadler.

The **Multiple Sclerosis Group** meet on Monday mornings in the Worship area.

The **St John's Ambulance** use the Upper and Lower Rooms on Tuesday evening.

U3A Choir uses the Upper Room on alternate Wednesdays at 2.15pm.

THURSDAY CLUB OUTINGS

We are planning to go on outings for our meetings in June and July. On both occasions there will be afternoon trips and we shall leave the Church at 12 noon, and travel in cars. We would like more people to join us to make up the numbers to constitute a group.

Thursday 26th June

A visit, with a guided tour, to **Witley Court and Gardens**. For groups, the adult admission charge is £4.68 (concession £3.74), plus £30 to be shared between the group for the tour. We plan to take a picnic lunch with us to have in the grounds.

Thursday 24th July

A visit, with an introductory talk, to the garden of **“Woodpeckers”** at Marlcliff, Bidford-on-Avon, created and maintained unaided since 1965 by retired doctors Andy and Lallie Cox. The garden is open under the National Gardens Scheme and there is a charge of £5 per head. There will be an opportunity to take a picnic lunch or to have a lunch at the Cottage of Content nearby.

Please let Pam Rayner (01386-552892) know if you would like to join us or to ask for further information.

ALL ARE WELCOME!

Woman’s Own

- 4 Visit to Croome Court
- 18 Rev Caroline Homan
Communion service

The funeral of **Megan Turver** took place on Friday 16th May at Peopleton. I have details but they are too long for this edition. They will appear in the July Messenger.

Sure

Then there was the caller who asked for a knitwear company in Woven.

Operator: 'Woven? Are you sure?'

Caller: 'Yes, of course. That's what it says on the label; Woven in Scotland.'



MIDSUMMER DAY

24th June

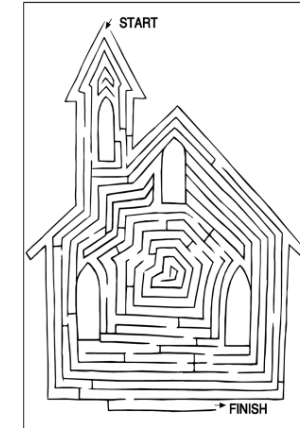
The idea of celebrating at mid-summer goes back a long time. In the early days of the Christian Church many of the old pagan festivals were Christianised – so that the mid-winter festival was used to celebrate the birth of Jesus and became Christmas. According to the Bible, John the Baptist (so called because he baptised Jesus) was 6 months older than Jesus so it was decided that the 24th June should be the festival of John the Baptist. This is very unusual because he is the only saint whose birth is celebrated; usually we remember the day that saints die.

John’s parents were Zachariah and Elizabeth (who was related to Mary, the mother of Jesus). Perhaps we remember John’s birth because of the special way that it happened. You can read about it in St Luke’s Gospel, chapter 1.



FROM THE TOP

Starting at the top of the steeple, can you find your way out?



Who rides a camel and carries a lamp?

Florence of Arabia.



QUICK BIT

If you would like to have your initials on a growing plant or tree, without damaging it at all, just cut your initials out of black paper and stick them on a flat leaf of a growing plant. In the autumn, remove the paper (your may have to soak it first) and the letters will appear where the leaf was masked from the sun!

Giving thanks for the work of Leonard Cheshire

60 years on

60 years ago this year Leonard Cheshire first started his work with the disabled. In a recent church service to commemorate 60 years of service, the Archbishop of York, John Sentamu, recalled how it all began, and mentioned some modern 'success stories'...

"It was in 1948, that Leonard Cheshire first took in Arthur Dykes, to care for him when he was dying of cancer. This became a life changing and transformative experience.

"Through this act of compassionate service, Leonard Cheshire found a personal faith which would sustain him in what became his vocation - to develop a world wide network of caring which would set free thousands of people with disabilities, enabling them to receive proper support and respect, as well as fulfilling their dreams. After all, Jesus, in John's Gospel, revealed to us that our final destination is love and he calls us to a wonderful shared feast.

"I'm sure that Leonard Cheshire would have been thrilled to hear the story of Uwiragiye Francoise, a 10-year-old service user from Cheshire Rwanda, who won two gold medals at the Special Olympics in China, coming first in the Long Jump and 50 metre events. Uwiragiye has no hearing or speech and lives with her

grandmother in difficult circumstances. She has participated in the sports programme of the Murumba Cheshire Service in Rwanda for the past year. Go for it Uwiragiye!

"I think Leonard would also have smiled at the recent case of the double-amputee sprinter Oscar Pistorius, who runs on two carbon-fibre blades, and was told he was ineligible to qualify for the Olympics, because his prosthetic limbs conferred an advantage over other runners. To be discriminated against because of disability is one thing but to be discriminated against because of your over-ability and for just being too good is quite another!

"Jesus did not belittle or patronise those for whom he cared. He treated them as worthy of respect. One day he demonstrated his love for his disciples by caring for their tired, road-worn, weary feet. He washed them, taking on the role of a servant. It is Jesus' pattern of care and self-giving which many of you met in Leonard Cheshire the man, and which we see and celebrate in the work of his organisation all over the world today.

"Confronted with his disciples' tired, dusty, aching, dirty feet, Jesus took the practical alternative. He did not first set up a committee. He did not call for an inquiry into how the feet were dirty in the first place. He didn't even delegate. He took a bowl and a towel and he washed his disciples' feet. He did it himself. Personally."

Prayer Calendar for June 2008

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|----|--|--------------------------|
| 1 | If I...have not love, I am only a resounding gong | 1 Corinthians 13: |
| 2 | Mick & Pat Hooper | |
| 3 | Mike & Francisca Hooper | |
| 4 | Mark Jennings & family | |
| 5 | Steve & Jacqui John & family | |
| 6 | Andrew & Ruth Jones & family | |
| 7 | Ema & Rob Kirbyson & family | |
| 8 | ... Live a life of love, just as Christ loved us | Ephesians 5:2 |
| 9 | Georgina Klee | |
| 10 | Margaret Locker | |
| 11 | Jean Lockhart | |
| 12 | Marjorie Ludlow | |
| 13 | Tony & Janet Liddington & family | |
| 14 | Roz Mackay | |
| 15 | Casting all your Care upon Him | 1 Peter 5:7 |
| 16 | David & Diane McBride | |
| 17 | Margaret McCully | |
| 18 | Colin & Gloria McLellan | |
| 19 | Viv McWhirter | |
| 20 | Alan & Claudine Mee | |
| 21 | Peter & Eileen Merry | |
| 22 | Be still, and know that I am God | Psalms 46:10 |
| 23 | David & Jean Middleton | |
| 24 | John & Florrie Newell | |
| 25 | Adrian & Chris Nicholls & family | |
| 26 | Beatie O'Boyle | |
| 27 | Joan Orr | |
| 28 | Wayne & Carol Palfrey | |
| 29 | He heals the broken heart | Psalms 147:3 |
| 30 | Roz Palfrey | |

Editorial

1. Messenger material for the July edition to be in by **noon on Sunday 22nd June**. Please observe this deadline.
2. If there are any serious errors/oversights, please tell me!
3. If you would prefer a larger print version of the Messenger, have a word with me.

Thanks

Mike Taylor